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NOV. 17, 2011 Vol. 53, No. 45 50¢

THOUSANDS CLOSE PORT

Victory in Oakland buoys Occupy movement

By Larry Hales
Oakland, Calif.

The call by Occupy Oakland for a general strike on Nov. 2 came after police from agencies across Alameda County brutally assaulted people trying to return to their encampment on Oct. 25 at Frank Ogawa Plaza (renamed Oscar Grant Plaza) after police had ousted them and ransacked their belongings.

Videos show what resembled a war zone as police attacked demonstrators with pepper gas, "flash-bang" grenades and disabling projectiles. A 24-year-old Marine veteran, Scott Olsen, was severely injured when a projectile launched by police hit him in the face. Dozens of people were arrested and injured and more than 500 cops from 12 different police agencies were involved.

The call for a general strike on Nov. 2 was a bold move.

The attempt to crack down on the occupation in Oakland was not an isolated event. Similar actions by police have occurred in Washington state, Denver, Atlanta and elsewhere.

Each time the state has stepped in, the movement has grown larger and attracted more attention. Its primary target, as evidenced by Occupy Wall Street, has been the banks and financial institutions and the wealthy. Each attack has made it ever clearer that the fundamental function of the state apparatus is to protect the interests of the ruling elite.

The Oakland General Strike came at this juncture.

Even four months earlier, it would have seemed impossible to launch a large action in a week's time. When the South Central Federation of Labor in Wisconsin, which represented 45,000 workers, endorsed a call for a general strike last winter in response to Gov. Scott Walker's bill to curtail collective bargaining, labor, progressives and revolutionaries held their collective breath. A tremendous uprising was underway in Wisconsin, but labor leaders did not heed the call.

But in Oakland, the occupation movement, spurred by the police attack and the lies emanating from city politicians, wasted no time. The proposal for a general strike, made by Marxist and cultural artist Boots Riley of the rap group The Coup, was supported by more than 90 percent of the General Assembly in Oakland. Support poured in from around the country. A national call was put out by BAYAN USA, Bail Out the People Movement, and other groups and individuals.

Day of the strike

This writer was able to participate in the general strike action. The call was ultimately supported by the Oakland Education Association, California Nurses Association, members of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, Service Employees Local 1021, United Auto Workers Local 2865, United Brotherhood of Carpenters Local 713, who voted to go on strike, and the marine division of the ILWU, the Inlandboatmen's Union.

City workers were allowed to take the day off.

Starting at 9 a.m. people began amassing at Oscar Grant Plaza and from there marched to downtown banks. They forced Wells Fargo, Bank of America and Chase to close. Young people tied a banner that read "Death to Capitalism" between two lamp poles.

No police were in sight. Though police agencies across Alameda County were put on alert and fully mobilized, they were not a visual presence as young people took streets, sealed off bank doors with caution tape, taped eviction posters to their doors and banged on the windows while chanting.

The noise was deafening. It is estimated that at least 50,000 people took part in numerous protests that wound through the

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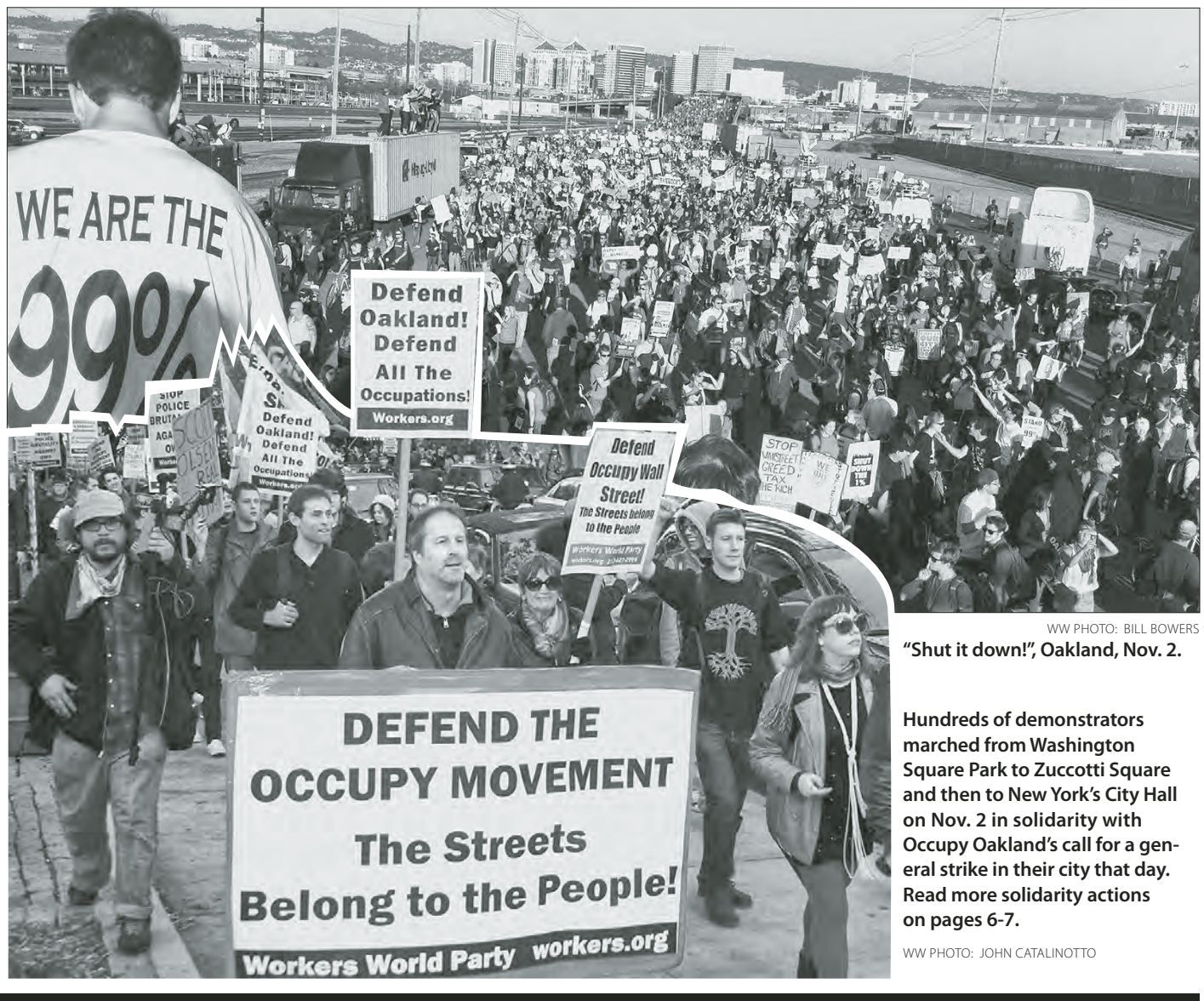

WW PHOTO: BILL BOWERS
"Shut it down!", Oakland, Nov. 2.

Hundreds of demonstrators marched from Washington Square Park to Zuccotti Square and then to New York's City Hall on Nov. 2 in solidarity with Occupy Oakland's call for a general strike in their city that day. Read more solidarity actions on pages 6-7.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

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CALIFORNIA

Forwarding the class struggle

Excerpts taken from a talk given by John Parker, of the Los Angeles Workers World branch, at the Workers World Party National Conference in New York City on Oct. 8-9.

California is waging a war on the working class and is targeting public sector unions, blaming them for the economic crisis because they "greedily" want to hold on to decent health care and don't want to lose a month's pay. Also, they're targeted because these workers don't want the children and elderly whom they serve to be denied health services or educational opportunities that could provide them with more of a chance of surviving in a state whose Black unemployment rate has climbed to more than 19 percent.

Gov. Jerry Brown can't find a budget that cuts deeply enough into the working class, especially hitting public sector workers, and which puts further regressive taxes on workers, not corporations, not the rich.

Los Angeles Mayor Anthony Villaraigosa's budget proposals didn't even hint at going after the richest, the corporations, not even the oil companies. He didn't mention the upside-down tax structure that allows California's richest to pay less tax than the poorest.

Studies show that if the richest families paid the same proportion of taxes as the bottom 50 percent, $490 billion would be generated nationally. California's figure would be $40 billion. It would cover the $28 billion budget gap and would erase Los Angeles' $1 billion budget deficit that's mostly being squeezed from public sector workers.

By going after the richest families' tax loopholes and balancing out the unfair effects of regressive taxes, there would be enough money to end all budget cuts and fund a real jobs program. California could generate $10 billion by requiring the highly profitable oil companies to pay an oil extraction tax that every other state collects. Interest payments could be withheld from the banks that ripped everyone off, and that are still stealing homes and profiting off that theft, while getting government bailouts.

John Parker WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

There is no reason for the cutbacks.

This isn't just about winning the fight over budget deficits. If it were won, it would only be a temporary victory if a fundamental reason for the shortfalls — the capitalist crisis of overproduction — were not addressed by exposing what this system really looks like. Capitalism doesn't need a major overhaul; it needs to be replaced by socialism.

We need to break through the view, even held by some who oppose the budget cuts, that capitalism must be saved.

The ruling class aims to divide the workers and is scapegoating immigrants and Black youth in California, criminalizing and incarcerating many. The reality that prisoners face is little known.

Let's enumerate the strengths of our class: As witnessed by the courageous Pelican Bay prisoners who began a hunger strike to protest torture and horrific conditions, many of our class are fed up and starting a new era of fightback in California. This motion is affecting the many who are in progressive, anti-war, union, national liberation, women's, lesbian, gay, bi, transgender, queer and student organizations.

This new fightback is shown in the gigantic anti-war marches after Sept. 11, by the one-and-a-half million immigrants and their supporters who joined the 2006 boycott, and by the many rallies against bank bailouts, corporate greed and foreclosures throughout California. The number of those willing to fight for change is great, and it is growing.

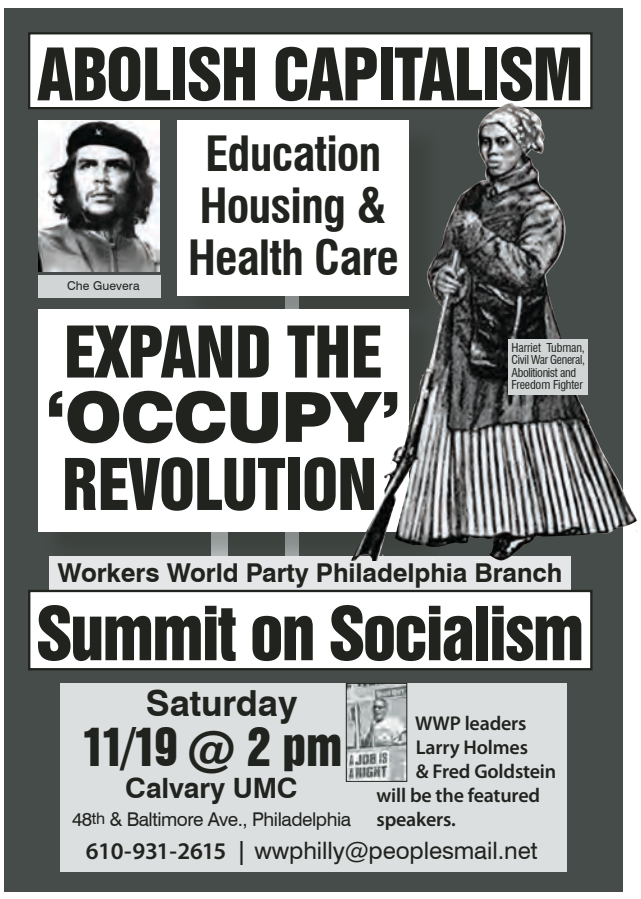
Our party has earned the confidence of the most active and militant organizations representing these ranks. We can be key in unifying these forces to create an unconquerable force ready to go on the offensive and wage real class warfare.

Our challenge in California is to help unify and win activists to this movement. Many are new to politics and activism. We must make sure they aren't railroaded into supporting Ron Paul, to settle for the Democratic Party, or to cave in to nonstruggle, apathy and demoralization.

Our party and our closest allies in California have too much experience in the struggle and are too strong to allow that to happen. Our strength is already shown in motion around the country,

We're in the California Wall Street occupations. Our Marxist, pro-struggle literature is getting a tremendous response. We'll make the most of this new era of class struggle and bring it as far as it can go — and then build on that.

The overwhelming strength and courage our class possesses against the ruling class is exemplified by Troy Davis. On his way to death, he could have focused on himself, but he said we must not stop fighting until victory is won. □



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Coming close to being executed

Hank Skinner wins stay based on DNA evidence

By Gloria Rubac

Bulletin: As this paper goes to press, on Nov. 7, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals stayed the execution of Hank Skinner pending the results of his legal challenges for DNA testing. The case was sent back to the trial court for further review. WW will provide an update.

Hank Skinner has been on Texas death row since 1995 for a 1993 murder he steadfastly has said he did not commit, and is now within days of a scheduled Nov. 9 execution. Yet the state of Texas continues to withhold key evidence that could be tested for DNA evidence before Skinner is put to death.

Gray County District Attorney Lynn Switzer is thumbing her nose at the law by refusing to release seven different untested items of evidence. A newly enacted Texas law requires DNA testing, regardless of when it is asked for, if a person's life is at stake. The law, signed by Gov. Rick Perry, went into effect on Sept. 1.

Skinner was convicted in 1995 of murdering his girlfriend, Twila Busby, and her two adult sons in their Pampa, Texas, home. Skinner doesn't deny that he was in the house that New Year's Eve in 1993, but maintains that he was too incapacitated from a mixture of vodka and codeine to carry out the attacks.

Skinner's court-appointed attorney had previously resigned from the district attorney's office after he was caught siphoning money in an asset forfeiture case. He was appointed as Skinner's counsel by a judge who was a personal friend. For representing Skinner, the judge ordered that the attorney be compensated an amount roughly equal to what the attorney owed in criminal fees.

Hank Skinner, daughter, Natalie Skinner.

This same attorney had formerly prosecuted Skinner on minor assault and theft charges, which were used as aggravating circumstances to get Skinner the death penalty. The attorney didn't object.

In 2000, the Medill Innocence Project at Northwestern University began investigating the Skinner case when students uncovered physical evidence that witnesses said was critical to the case. The evidence includes a rape kit; fingernail clippings from Twila Busby; the murder weapons; and a windbreaker covered in blood and hair, found near the murder scene. The prosecution did not use this evidence in trial, and Skinner's defense attorney did not ask for it, despite Skinner's requests.

After Northwestern University professor David Protess challenged the district attorney on a talk show later that year, Texas conducted preliminary mitochondrial DNA testing on hair fibers Twila Busby was clutching at the time of her death. When those tests showed that the hairs belonged to neither Skinner nor the victim, the state halted any further testing.

Now the case is generating worldwide interest, with editorials in every major Texas newspaper as well as in the Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, West Australian, Guardian (Britain) and Huffington Post. The New York Daily News held a poll this week; the majority of respondents voted that Skinner should be allowed DNA testing.

On Nov. 4, Skinner's supporters hand-delivered 16,000 signed petitions to Switzer urging her to grant the DNA testing. She has not responded. Then, in just two days, more than 130,000 people signed petitions calling on Texas governor and presidential candidate Perry to stay the execution until the evidence is tested.

"Testing DNA evidence has exonerated 275 prisoners in the United States since 1989, including 43 in Texas. So it seems unbelievable that the state of Texas refuses to turn over key evidence to be tested," said Sandrine Ageorges-Skinner, Skinner's spouse and an activist with Ensemble Contre la Peine de Mort (Together Against the Death Penalty) based in Paris, France.

According to Locke Bowman, director of the MacArthur Justice Center at Northwestern University, "Skinner's long and winding journey through the Texas and federal court systems has been an absurd — and obscene — waste of time and money. ... Shame on the Texas prosecutors and the judges who've wasted all this time obstructing the search for truth in Skinner's case." (Huffington Post, March 22)

The view of Skinner's supporters is summed up by the San Antonio Express-News, which editorialized, "Justice isn't served by putting innocent people behind bars ... or on death row. Testing for DNA evidence should be routine in death penalty cases. It is unconscionable that the state would fight Skinner or anyone else to prevent such testing." (April 3)

Protess, now head of the Chicago Innocence Project, recalls the recent execution of Troy Davis in Georgia: "Skinner has gained support for his cause from, among others, six of the jurors who found him guilty and voted for death. Although this sordid episode is unfolding in Texas — a state that has already performed almost one-third of the country's executions this year — it is not too late to speak out with Georgia still on your mind. Troy Davis would have liked that." (Huffington Post, Oct. 4)

More information is available at www.hankskinner.org. □

Stop SHU torture: California prisoners fight for their lives

Excerpted from a talk given by San Francisco Workers World organizer, Judy Greenspan, at the Workers World Party National Conference on Oct. 8-9 in New York City.

Ho Chi Minh, the beloved and well-known revolutionary comrade, wrote that when the prison doors are opened, the real dragon will fly out. Ho, leader of the Vietnamese people's struggle against imperialism, knew a great deal about the inside of prisons and suffered his share of torture and isolation.

The conditions inside California's prisons have created their own legacy of dragons. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the assassination of George Jackson, a revolutionary prisoner who was so dangerous to this system that he was set up and murdered inside San Quentin Prison.

It is also the 40th anniversary of Jonathan Jackson's courageous attempt to free revolutionary Black prisoners from California's dungeons. The California Department of Corrections and the state of California responded to the growing radicalization of California's prisoners by building Security Housing Unit prisons — lockdown units that would house radicals, nonconformists, community activists and others in endless isolation. Today, more than 12,000 California prisoners are on a hunger strike to oppose the conditions in these lockdown prisons.

On July 1, thousands of prisoners at Pelican Bay State Prison and other maximum-security lockdown units in California went on a hunger strike to demand an end to the endless lockdown and torture of SHU prisoners. They demanded greater access to human necessities like mail, food and visits by their loved ones.

WW PHOTO: JOHN PARKER

Judy Greenspan

The Pelican Bay prisoners also called for an end to the gang-labeling of prisoners and the snitch-or-die policy that currently keeps thousands of predominantly African-American, Latino, and Native American prisoners in 6 by 10 foot cells, 23 and one-half hours a day, with little or no human contact.

Once a prisoner is named as a gang member, he or she will remain locked down until they snitch or supply other names to the CDCR. Many prisoners have spent between 20 and 40 years locked down for their refusal to participate in this unjust, illegal and inhumane policy. Ruchell Magee, charged along with Angela Davis in the San Rafael, Calif., courtroom escape case, and Hugo Pinell, one of the San Quentin Six, have each served about 40 years in the SHU. By the end of July, the CDCR had promised to look into the demands of the hunger strikers and to begin to make long overdue changes in SHU conditions and policies. At that time, the prisoners suspended their hunger strike, and many prisoners were in a weakened and vulnerable medical state.

However, true to its anti-prisoner legacy, the CDCR did not move to change the conditions within the SHU units at Pelican Bay. On Sept. 26, the prisoners resumed their hunger strike and since then have faced escalating intimidation and retaliation for their actions. This time around, rather than negotiating with the prisoners' appointed mediators, the CDCR has banned two of the activist attorneys from visiting prisoners at Pelican Bay. Very recently, visitors who came to see the men on hunger strike were not allowed into the prison. Prison officials are threatening those on hunger strike with long-term SHU confinement and gang labeling for their activism.

California, long known as the prison state, is pouring millions of dollars down the drain to continue the racist, unjust, inhumane incarceration of poor people from oppressed communities, while at the same time it is cutting millions of dollars from the education budget. Prison is a more profitable business than preparing children to succeed in life.

Every struggle today must link itself to the life-and-death fight for survival being mounted by California prisoners and others around the country. Our prisons are filled with powerful dragons who must be returned to the community so that we can work together to tear down this draconian system of incarceration, racism and war, and build socialism. Stop SHU torture. Tear down the walls. Victory to the hunger strikers! □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS
& the Black Freedom Struggle

Anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper.
Edited by Monica Moorehead. Includes:

- **Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination** Larry Holmes
- **Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery** Sam Marcy
- **Black Youth: Repression & Resistance** LeiLani Dowell
- **The Struggle for Socialism Is Key** Monica Moorehead
- **Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice!** Saladin Muhammad • **Alabama's Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation** Consuela Lee
- **Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior** Mumia Abu-Jamal
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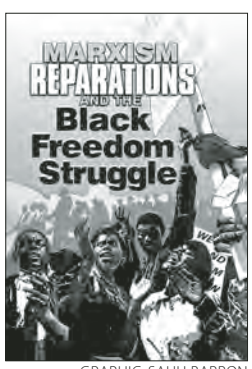


GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

Available at Amazon.com & bookstores around the country www.workers.org/reparations/

Occupy Oakland strike committee shows support for longshore workers

The Occupy Oakland Strike Committee issued the following statement on Oct. 29.

On Wednesday, Nov. 2, as part of the Oakland General Strike, we will march on the Port of Oakland and shut it down. We will converge at 5 p.m. at 14th and Broadway and march to the port to shut it down before the 7 p.m. night shift.

We are doing this in order to blockade the flow of capital on the day of the General Strike, as well as to show our commitment to solidarity with longshore workers in their struggle against EGT in Longview, Wash. EGT is an international grain exporter which is attempting to rupture longshore jurisdiction. The driving force behind EGT is Bunge Ltd., a leading agribusiness and food company which reported $2.4 billion in profit in 2010; this company has strong ties to Wall Street. This is but one example of Wall Street's corporate attack on workers.

The Oakland General Strike will demonstrate the wide-reaching implications of the Occupy Wall Street movement. The entire world is fed up with the huge disparity of wealth caused by the present system. Now is the time that the people are doing something about it. The Oakland General Strike is a warning shot to the 1 percent — their wealth only exists because the 99 percent creates it for them. □

Oakland, Nov. 2.

Thousands close port

Victory in Oakland buoys Occupy movement

Continued from page 1

streets of downtown Oakland. The activists directed traffic and ultimately ended up at the port of Oakland — the fifth-busiest port in the country. Earlier, a march explicitly against capitalism included as many as 5,000 students, children, teachers and homeless in a multinational crowd.

The march to the port began to assemble at 4 p.m. Several busloads of people were also driven the two-plus miles to the port. Earlier in the day, the port operated at 50 percent capacity, with at least one-third of the jobs unclaimed. Because many high-skilled positions weren't filled, whole crews were idled.

Three groups of marchers left from downtown Oakland between 4:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. Still there was no visible police presence other than helicopters. It was later revealed that there were plainclothes police in the crowd, but no cruisers or uniform cops on motorcycles, bikes, horses or foot could be seen.

As the march neared the docks, it became clear how large it was. Tens of thousands were participating to stop the unloading and loading of ships by the night shift.

No trucks were allowed to leave. Barricades were erected and protesters blocked trucks with their bodies, asking the drivers for solidarity. In every case the trucks turned back.

Blocking entrance to Wells Fargo bank, Oakland, Nov. 2.

WW PHOTOS: BILL BOWERS

Protesters blocked every gate and waited until nightfall, when an arbitrator was supposed to come and determine whether or not the workers could "safely" cross the picket lines at each gate. The thousands who marched on the port remained, sitting on cold concrete or standing, talking politics, getting acquainted with one another. The mood was electric.

ILWU Local 10 has a history of dynamic action, going back to one of its founders and leaders, Harry Bridges, who helped lead the San Francisco General Strike of 1934 that ended with all the ports on the West Coast being unionized. ILWU Local 10 has led solidarity actions against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, against apartheid in South Africa and in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. ILWU Local 21 is currently leading a valiant effort against EGT grain terminal in Longview, Wash.

Demonstrators waited as the start of the shift was moved from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Finally, word of the shift being canceled was greeted by cheers. The marching band that had participated in all the day's actions continued to play, energizing the crowd.

Marchers began leaving the port, stopping to talk to people at the barricades. It was under an overpass, just off the docks, that the first police cars were spotted: rows of them from Oakland, California Highway Patrol and other agencies.

Some people remained to make sure no trucks left to deliver their cargo. Later in the evening a group of a few hundred tried to take over a building and were met with police violence. Again, a thick cloud of pepper gas wafted over downtown as cops battled the protesters who had chosen a more confrontational action.

The day was a success and has inspired other calls for general strikes around the country.

Consciousness is indeed deepening. The crisis is not going away.

Now is a time for boldness and action. The Oakland General Strike proves that much is possible and can be achieved.

This is a time when revolutionary ideology is needed more than ever. The fundamental contradiction is between the oppressed and working class, on the one hand, and the ruling wealthy class and their system, on the other. The only way to end the increasing misery is to do away with this capitalist system and build socialism. □

Palestinian theatre company visits New York City

By Dolores Cox
New York

New York City welcomed students and staff of the Jenin Freedom Theatre on Oct. 27. Friends of the Jenin Freedom Theatre and the Peace & Justice Task Force of All Souls Church in Manhattan presented the event. The older students told about their lives and what it means to engage in "Creation Under Occupation."

The Freedom Theatre is a community-based children's theatre, founded in Jenin in 2006.

Jenin is a West Bank Palestinian city, a refugee camp with a population of 16,000. Twenty percent of the residents are under 20. It is one of the most deprived areas of Occupied Palestine. Its people live in poverty and isolation. They are surrounded by electrified fences constructed by Israel's repressive government.

The Israeli military bombed and invaded Jenin in 2002, traumatizing and terrifying the children, who witnessed violence, destruction and death or the threat of it.

Jenin's children were described as "the walking dead" before the theatre was established. They suffered with post-traumatic stress disorder. Many wished for death as a solution and permanent escape from Israel's tyranny and repression.

The theatre gave them an opportunity to heal while living in an uncertain present and facing an unknown future. It also gave them the strength and confidence to face the world.

In April, Juliano Mer Khamis, the theatre's co-founder and director, was assassinated by Israeli forces outside the theatre. In late July, after continuing to harass the staff, Israeli soldiers attacked the theatre. They arrested Adnan Naghaghiye, the facilities manager, and Bilal Saadi, board chairperson, and took them to Jalame prison inside Israel.

On Aug. 6, Rami Hwayel, a leading drama student on his way to the theatre, was arrested at a checkpoint. The soldiers returned on Aug. 22 at night, raiding the theatre, beating Mohammed Naghaghiye, the security guard, ransacking his home and then arresting him.

No charges or reasons were given for these arrests. The Freedom Theatre called for assistance from supporters worldwide. Hundreds of people responded. They signed the protest statement and called Israeli representatives in the West Bank and Washington, D.C. The detainees have since been released.

This year the theatre group performed a play called "While Waiting." Based on Samuel Beckett's play, "Waiting for Godot," it symbolizes the message of waiting for help from anyone, while not knowing who is the enemy or who the friend. The drama students say Israel has used the occupation as a tool to destroy Palestinian minds and their culture, and so the psychodrama is a form of therapy that provides freedom and liberation for them.

The group waited many months for visas to come to the United States. They had to obtain permission at border crossings in Israel and Jordan.

While in New York City, the group gave a theatrical performance in the East Village, and they attended a celebratory benefit for their theatre held at the Public Theatre on Oct. 30. It featured renowned artists who consider the Freedom Theatre to be "an invaluable cultural beacon in the Middle East."

The students also visited "Occupy Wall Street" and were pleased to see that people were "finally waking up and fighting for a pro-peace economy." They commented, "The U.S. people should demand that their government stop using its citizens' money to make wars."

For more information and to donate, visit www.thefreedomtheatre.org. □

On the Picket Line

By Sue Davis

Calif. women workers file new bias case vs. Wal-Mart

It only took four months for women workers at Walmart stores in California to come back swinging after the Supreme Court dismissed their national class-action lawsuit. On Oct. 27, more than 90,000 current and former employees charged the world's largest, multibillion-dollar retailer with discriminatory practices on pay and job promotion. Their lawyers announced an "armada" of lawsuits in other regions over the next six months. By focusing on specific regions, the lawyers can more easily document specific instances of bias. For instance, the lawsuit was initiated in 1999 when a woman discovered that a male employee with the same job but less experience was making $23,000 a year more than she was. (New York Times, Oct. 28)

Nat'l Taxi Workers joins AFL-CIO

When the AFL-CIO accepted the charter of the National Taxi Workers Alliance on Oct. 20, it was a sign of the changing nature of the union movement. Increasingly the labor federation is recognizing workers who have been traditionally excluded from coverage by labor law, such as domestic workers, or whose bargaining rights have been obliterated by rule changes, which slashed taxi drivers' rights in the Reagan era. Now the federation has agreed to use its clout to fight for these workers. (AFL-CIO Now Blog, Oct. 20)

Historic contract for carwash workers in L.A.

Carwash workers, who are predominantly Spanish-speaking immigrants, established a precedent in Southern California on Oct. 24 when the carwasheros at Bonus Car Wash in Santa Monica reached a first-ever contract. The workers, who joined Steelworkers (USW) Local 675 this summer, won a wage increase, health and safety protections, grievance and arbitration procedures, and job protection if the business is sold. Meanwhile, the workers at Marina Car Wash in Venice will have a contract when the business reopens, and workers at three other carwashes joined Local 675.

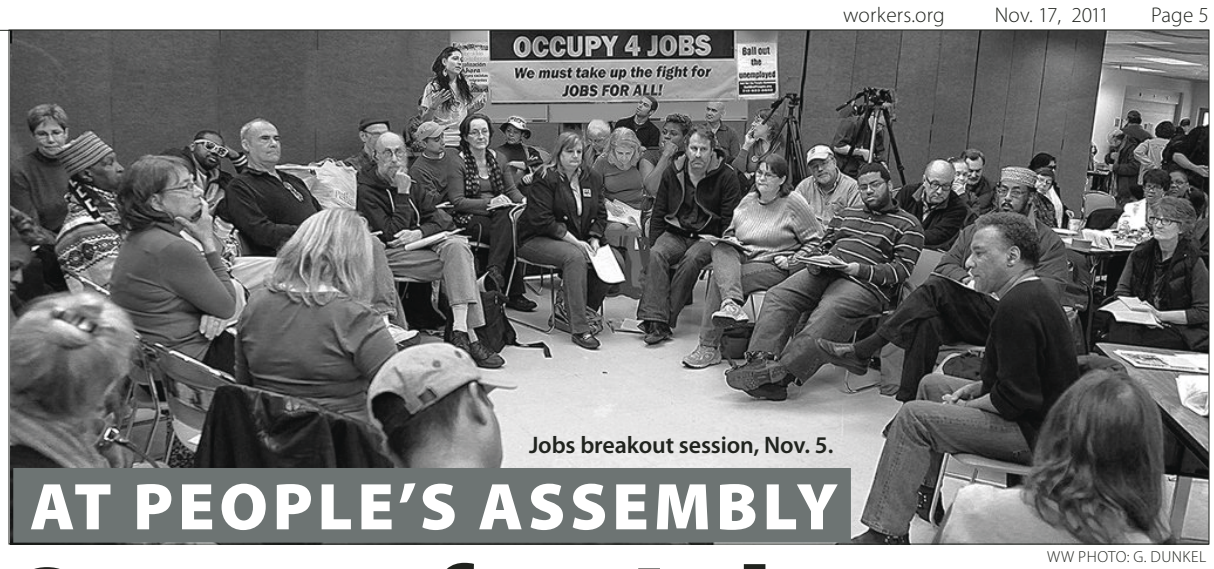
The USW set up the Car Wash Workers Organizing Committee and the CLEAN (Community Labor Environmental Action Network) Carwash Campaign in 2008 to organize the 18,000 carwash workers around the country and stop rampant wage theft, unhealthy working conditions, anti-immigrant bias and violations of anti-discrimination laws. The campaign is supported by more than 100 community, religious and other activist groups. The bosses took in $872 million in 2002 by cheating the workers — not paying them the minimum wage ($8 an hour in California) or overtime — and by using pollutants and unsafe cleaning practices that endanger both the workers and the environment. Not only will organizing this industry help some of the most exploited, oppressed workers in this country, but it will swell the workers' movement at a critical time for organized labor. (usw.org)

Latino labor org. calls for new view of immigration

A new study by the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, an AFL-CIO constituency group, calls for a focus on the root causes of immigration while denouncing anti-immigrant policies. LCLAA's executive director, Hector Sanchez, who authored "Disposable Workers: Immigration after NAFTA and the Nation's Addiction to Cheap Labor," points out that "11 million undocumented people in the most powerful country in the world is not a mistake, it is public policy — yet no one is asking who is benefiting from such a broken system. It is hypocritical to keep blaming immigrants for complex problems while we consume produce harvested by immigrants, occupy buildings and homes erected by them, and drive on roads made possible by their labor. It's time to change the debate and promote fair trade policies that seek sustainable economic development for all partners involved and respect workers' rights at home and abroad." (AFL-CIO Now Blog, Oct. 26)

ILWU 21 fined another $65,000

Local 21 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union was fined $65,000 on Nov. 1 for violating a civil restraining order on Sept. 21 that bars members from blocking train tracks leading to the EGT grain terminal in Longview, Wash. A dozen protesters were arrested while fighting for ILWU jobs at the new terminal. Union fines now total $315,000; the ILWU has already appealed the first $250,000. A federal mediator is scheduled to hear the dispute in early December. (tdn.com, Nov. 1) But how can justice prevail when EGT can use the courts and the police against ILWU? □



Jobs breakout session, Nov. 5.

AT PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Occupy for Jobs Movement is launched

By Brenda Ryan
Bronx, N.Y.

Inspired by the Occupy Wall Street movement, activists have launched an Occupy For Jobs Network to demand a massive public works program big enough to provide jobs at union wages for the more than 30 million unemployed and underemployed workers in the country.

The network was proposed and adopted at a People's Assembly held Nov. 5 at Hostos Community College in the South Bronx. The event drew a multinational crowd of activists from organizations throughout New York and several other cities. Activists from Occupy Wall Street, Occupy the Bronx, Occupy Philadelphia and Occupy Boston were among those who enthusiastically embraced the formation of a network to fight for jobs.

"Occupy Wall Street has opened up space for people to do other things," said Larry Holmes, a founder of the Bail Out the People Movement. "It is vital to open up new fronts and no front is more necessary than the fight for jobs. The underlying issue is depression level unemployment."

Occupy For Jobs is intended to be a national network with local affiliates determining their priorities and working together to coordinate national actions. During a breakout session on the network, people adopted a proposal to hold actions on the Martin Luther King holiday weekend of Jan. 14-16.

They also agreed to do something on Nov. 23, the deadline for the congressional Super Committee to announce its proposals to slash at least $1.2 trillion from the federal budget. Among other things, the Occupy For Jobs Network will demand no closing of thousands of post offices, which would involve slashing 250,000 postal worker jobs.

Sharon Black, a member of the All People's Congress in Baltimore, said the Occupy For Jobs Network will do whatever is necessary to expand the fight for jobs in order to be effective.

"If they go to shut down a workplace, what should we do? Occupy! If they try to shut down post offices, what should we do? Occupy!" she declared. "If they try to do anything against workers, the rest of us have got to unite and take action."

It was particularly significant that the People's Assembly took place at Hostos College, the site of a historic occupation in 1976. Ramon Jimenez, a founder of the South Bronx Community Congress and a participant in that occupation, said students occupied the school for 20 days when the city announced it was going to close it. They won the battle to keep the school open. "It all took place because people fought back, struggled and occupied," Jimenez said.

During the meeting, people noted the current struggles that are taking place. Aminifu Williams, a leader of the People's Organization for Progress, reported that his group has protested in downtown Newark for 130 days in a row calling for a national jobs program like the Work Projects Administration. Launched by the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, the WPA employed millions of people in the construction of buildings, roads, bridges and schools, as well as in arts and literary projects.

The Jobless Working Group of Occupy Wall Street held a march to subway stations on Oct. 28 to demand that the Metropolitan Transit Authority provide free fares for the unemployed. And Occupy Latin America, which is within Occupy Wall Street en Español, is holding a march on Nov. 20 focused on women's rights. And the Immigrant Rights Working Group of OWS is planning a march at Zuccotti Park on immigrant rights.

The initial signers of the call for an Occupy For Jobs Network include the Bail Out the People Movement; Frantz Mendez, president, Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751; Chris Silvera, secretary-treasurer, Teamsters Local 808; former Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney; Teresa Gutierrez, co-coordinator of the May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights; Larry Adams, vice president, People's Organization for Progress and former president, National Postal Mail Handlers Local 300; Clarence Thomas, ILWU Local 10 and Rev. C.D. Witherspoon, pres., Baltimore SCLC..□

Clarence Thomas supports jobs movement, shutting Oakland ports

The following solidarity statement was written by Clarence Thomas, International Longshore Workers Union Local 10 member and Million Worker March leader, for the People's Assembly meeting held at Hostos Community College in the Bronx, N.Y., on Nov. 5.

Greetings and solidarity,

I am exhilarated from the recent historical events here in Oakland.

In my opinion this has been one of the strongest examples of the power of the people in the U.S. and the 21st century. It is difficult to imagine that in one week's time a call for a general strike — A Day of Action by the Occupy Oakland General Assembly — could have generated the overwhelming response from the people of Oakland.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words and most certainly the thousands that marched through the fifth largest port speak volumes while ... organized labor, which only makes up 7.2 percent of the private sector workers, has been incapable of calling for a general strike in response to the unrelenting war on the working class by the ruling class. It is indeed remarkable how rank-and-file union members in the city of Oakland responded so positively to the call.

The city administrator of Oakland, on Oct. 28, 2011, issued a statement that SEIU Local 1021 had been authorized to utilize various types of leave in order to participate in the stop work action on Nov. 2. This offer was extended to other city workers. It's an example of how this call made by the General Assembly of Occupy Oakland Movement resonated with workers in the city of Oakland.

Although Nov. 2 fell short of being a full general strike in the truest sense of the word — the city of Oakland and the fifth largest port in the U.S. were SHUT DOWN! Only essential services continued to be provided.

In conclusion, I hope that the action of the Occupy Oakland movement can be duplicated in cities around the country and that issues such as jobs and the Occupy 4 Jobs movement can be put front and center at the Occupy movement. □

U.S. SOLIDARITY WITH OCCUPY

WW PHOTO: STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

OCCUPY BOSTON

Unites workers, students

An estimated 1,000 workers, students and activists marched from Occupy Boston/Dewey Square on Nov. 2 in a strong show of solidarity with Occupy Oakland. Many of the marchers were among the 141 arrested three weeks ago by Boston riot police for expanding Occupy Boston onto the Rose Kennedy Greenway, a patch of land adjacent to its current site. Occupy coverage in Workers World newspaper was well received, as were "Occupy for Jobs" placards carried by Bail Out the People participants. The protesters marched through downtown Boston, stopping at the Hyatt Hotel to hear Ed Childs, chief shop steward of UNITE-HERE Local 26, condemn the dismissal last year of 98 immigrant housekeeping workers. Childs told the crowd, "Hyatt's greed is what oppression by the 1 percent is all about." He led the crowd in chanting, "Union! Union! Union!" and "What's disgusting? Union busting!" The march proceeded to the State House to protest state budget cuts and then marched on to the Boston School Committee headquarters to support hundreds of Fenway High School students and teachers, who had marched there to protest the moving and merging of their school with another one having inferior facilities. Earlier in the day, after having walked out of several area colleges, hundreds of students marched from Dewey Square through the financial district protesting exorbitant student debt burdens. Many returned to Northeastern University at the end of the march to support students facing school suspension discipline for having been arrested in the Boston police crackdown on the attempted expansion of Occupy Boston.

— Gerry Scoppettuolo and Frank Neisser

OCCUPY HOUSTON

Bailout of banks condemned

Supporters of Occupy Houston came out on Nov. 4 for a Divestment March that wound its way through downtown Houston's skyscraper-dominated streets and encouraged the 99% to take their money out of the major financial institutions and put it into small community-owned credit unions.

Chanting, "Banks got bailed out! We got sold out!" the angry protesters visited the buildings housing Bank of America, Wells Fargo, JPMorgan Chase and Amegy bank. At each bank people went inside to close their accounts. Several came out and cut up their bank cards to great cheers from the crowd, declaring they would use community banks instead, out of protest.

A homemade coffin draped with the U.S. flag was carried throughout the march, along with a sign saying, "U.S. Economy — Killed by the Big Banks and War Profiteers!"

Many on the march had lost their jobs. Some were wondering how they could pay back student loans without a job, and others were worried about layoffs. Many took a sick day, and some came with generations of their family. Some were infants while others were seasoned activists in their seventies and eighties.

Occupy Houston began in late September and is located at Tranquility Park, on a square block in between Houston City Hall and the U.S. Courthouse.

— Report and photo by Gloria Rubac

OCCUPY JERSEY CITY

Opposes post office closings

Occupy Jersey City continues its presence at the Journal Square transportation crossroads with a daily General Assembly that passing students and commuters are encouraged to take part in. Members of a nearby community of homeless people — some of whom work full time — also now consider themselves part of the OJC movement.

OJC has recently begun to focus on strengthening its ties with local working-class and progressive organizations.

On Nov. 3, it gathered signatures on behalf of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union Local 300 for a petition protesting the closing of thousands of U.S. Postal Service branch offices. The political buzz created by the Occupy movement was evident by the ease in which passersby agreed to put their names and addresses on the petition.

And on Nov. 5, OJC formally introduced itself to Veterans For Peace/Chapter 021, which was meeting at a local community center. Around 30 OJC and VFP members then marched together for a few blocks and rallied for an hour across the street from a large supermarket where they displayed posters and distributed flyers raising the issue of the war economy and the Oakland police attack on Iraq War veteran Scott Olsen. The community response was very positive.

— Michael Kramer

OCCUPY ATLANTA

Resists police brutality

Following the arrest of 53 people on Oct. 25 and the dismantling of the encampment in the newly-named Troy Davis Park, Occupy Atlanta plans to resume a 24-hour presence in the downtown green space. Since Oct. 27, activists have set up tents, held general assemblies and mobilized for protests such as the one against Sun Trust Bank while leaving the park by the closing time.

On Nov. 5, as the 11 p.m. hour approached, hundreds of people were gathered in the park and on the sidewalks. In a surprise move, the protesters moved onto Peachtree Street and started a march. Very quickly the large police presence of uniformed cops was reinforced by a dozen mounted police, SWAT, riot-geared "Robocops," 30 or more motorcycle police and a helicopter overhead. As the march went south on Peachtree, a single motorcycle cop came barreling north, headed directly for the demonstrators.

His path was impeded by people who did not move fast enough, but also by youth who put their hands out to slow him down. As the front wheel of his bike was within inches of people, the machine lurched to the right and he jumped off. Immediately the crowd was stormed by cops who pushed and shoved a way clear for him to drive off in a rush. One youth was arrested and charged with assault. Within minutes, the riot police and mounted patrol cordoned off the street, allowing uniformed cops to begin arresting people, including three journalists, several students and a man coming out of a nearby restaurant. In total, 20 people were taken into custody.

On Nov. 7, Occupy Atlanta forces went to the foreclosed home of a family threatened with eviction in suburban Gwinnett County. Tents have been set up on the front lawn and a large banner proclaiming "This House Is Occupied" hangs on the front porch. Metro Atlanta has consistently been among the areas with the highest foreclosure rates in the country. Occupy Atlanta states that they will stay until the bank reaches a settlement with the family to remain in their house.

—Dianne Mathiowetz

OCCUPY CHICAGO

WW PHOTO: ERIC STRUCH

300-strong rally and march in Chicago Loop to end social service cuts, Nov. 7.

LOW-WAGE CAPITALISM

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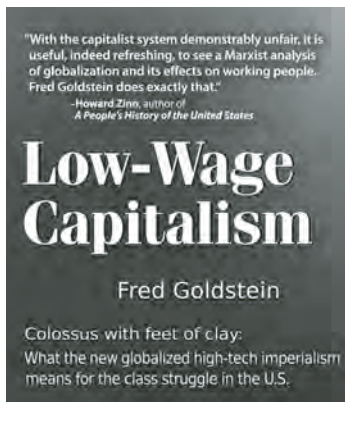


OAKLAND AGAINST REPRESSION

Occupys spread all over Wisconsin

Across the state of burgeoning Wisconsin Occupy Wall Street encampments, activities and events continue to grow.

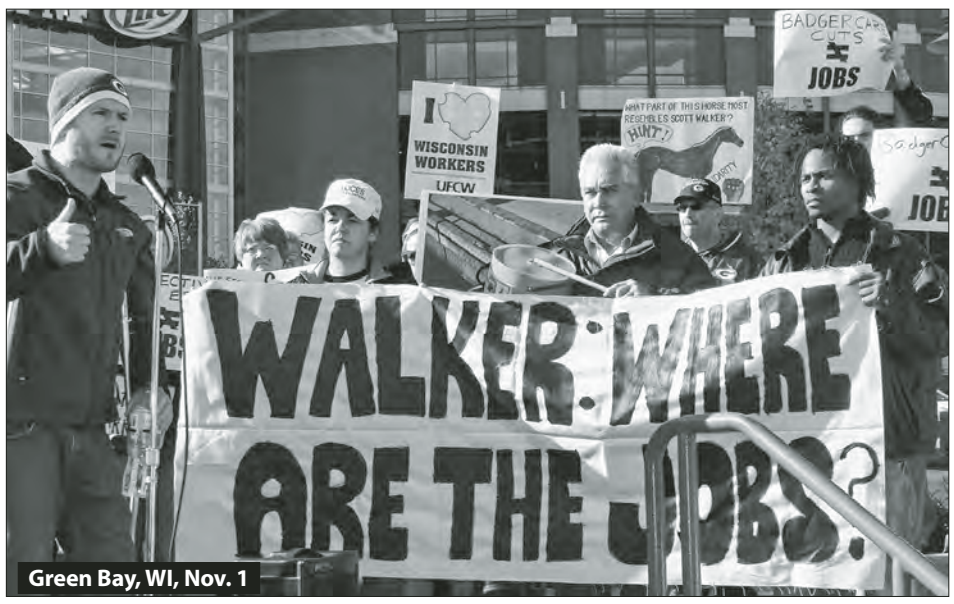
On Nov. 1, members of Occupy Green Bay supported a Wisconsin Jobs Now protest at Lambeau Field, where a multinational, intergenerational crowd of dozens of students and workers protested a Gov. Scott Walker speech to business executives, raising their voices to demand jobs. Occupy Green Bay also sponsored meetings Nov. 4-5 in Green Bay and on Nov. 4 marched throughout the downtown area and visited bus stops to distribute leaflets about their upcoming events.

On Nov. 2, Occupy The Hood-Milwaukee sponsored a People's Hearing at the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 998 hall in Milwaukee to demand that bills targeting convicted felons, which are now in committee in the Wisconsin Legislature, be killed.

The bills would make it virtually impossible for convicted felons to get a job and if employed would make them indentured servants of their employers because the bill would prevent felons from suing their employers for discrimination. The bill's provisions would be retroactive if passed. The packed, hours-long People's Hearing heard from a rainbow of speakers and labor, community and student representatives who denounced the racist, anti-worker bills while also calling for a federal jobs program, a moratorium on foreclosures, and that the banks pay for the economic crisis they created. Occupy Milwaukee canceled its General Assembly, encouraging its participants to attend the People's Hearing instead.

Also on Nov. 2, students at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee sponsored a rally and march on campus. After a speakout at Spaights Plaza on campus, students and their allies took to the streets to march around campus. Two students and a photojournalist from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel were arrested during the march. This is the third journalist the Milwaukee police have arrested in the past three months.

On Nov. 3, Occupy Appleton sponsored a press conference at Chase Bank and then throughout the Nov. 4-5 weekend sponsored events at City Park. Occupy Eau Claire, Occupy Stevens Point, Occupy La Crosse, Occupy Madison and Occupy Sheboygan are all in motion.



Green Bay, WI, Nov. 1

The next major event for Occupy Milwaukee is a Nov. 17 Day Of Action called "We Declare A State Of Emergency For The 99%," which will begin at 3:30 p.m. on North Avenue over Interstate 43 and will assemble at Carver Park, 911 W. Brown St., Milwaukee. For more information: www.occupymilwaukee.org or http://wi99.org.

On Dec. 3, the Wisconsin Bail Out The People Movement will host a People's Meeting at the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 998 hall at 724 N. 26th (and Wisconsin) from 1 to 4 p.m. This discussion and planning meeting will be a gathering of labor, community and student individuals, activists and organizers including Occupy Wall Street participants from across Wisconsin and beyond. For more information: www.wibailoutpeople.org.

— Report and photo by Bryan G. Pfeifer

OCCUPY PHILADELPHIA

Sit-in leads to arrests

Four hundred protesters marched in Philadelphia on Nov. 2 — Occupy Oakland Solidarity Day. Marchers wound through Center City streets before stopping outside "super committee" member Sen. Pat Toomey's office to denounce his intention to drastically cut entitlement programs. As the march later passed by the Comcast building, activists rushed inside and staged a sit-in. Ten marchers were arrested for refusing to leave. Comcast pays no city taxes, due to a controversial tax abatement program, even though the city's budget shortfall has resulted in massive cuts in education. In contrast, Comcast's third quarter profits totaled $908 million, up 5 percent from a year ago.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

OCCUPY DETROIT

Calls for jobs, no foreclosures & shutoffs

Occupy Detroit ended its third week with a spirited demonstration organized by labor in support of the Occupy Detroit movement. More than 500 persons, including many rank-and-file members of organized labor, gathered at the Labor Legacy Monument in Hart Plaza and marched through downtown to the Occupy Detroit camp. During the march, a large banner that called on President Barack Obama to use his executive authority to initiate a massive public jobs program was carried. Signs called for a moratorium on foreclosures, a Works-Progress-Administration-style jobs program, and a bailout of the people — not the banks. Vehicles delivered donations, collected by the unions throughout the week, to the camp. The demonstration ended with a rally that included speakers from the camp as well as young labor organizers.

The week started with a march on Nov. 1 from the Occupy Detroit camp to a rally at DTE Energy headquarters. Marchers demanded an end to utility shutoffs and opposition to a recent $174 million rate increase. More than 150 people picketed DTE, demanding a transition to green energy with green jobs.

On Nov. 2, Occupy Detroiters crashed a taped interview given by New York Stock Exchange CEO Duncan Niederauer at the Wayne State University Business School. Two Occupy Detroit members were arrested during the program, one for asking Niederauer for advice on how occupiers might avoid arrest in the same manner that Wall Street bankers had avoided arrest for their role in the financial meltdown. The second person was arrested for asking about the CEO's accountability for presiding over the economic crash. As the activists were arrested, the crowd chanted, "Jail the CEO, not Susie and Joe!"

— Mike Shane

OCCUPY ROCHESTER, N.Y.

PHOTO: JOSIE CLANCY

Hits illegal curfew

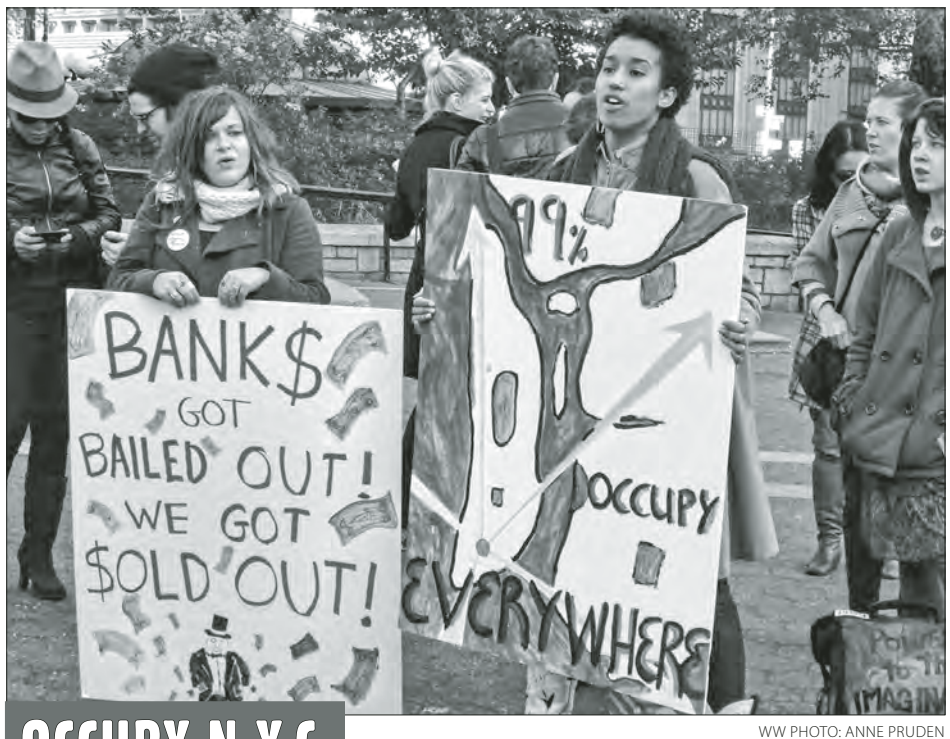
On Nov. 2, 400 people met at Washington Square Park and marched to Rochester City Hall in solidarity with Occupy Oakland and Scott Olsen, the injured, Iraq anti-war veteran. They also protested the arrests of 32 Rochester occupiers the week before. There was significant community and labor support.

Some small business owners are contributing food and two nearby churches are providing bathroom facilities for the occupiers. General Assembly meetings are once or twice a day.

One was held Wednesday after the march, and a decision was made to reoccupy the park and to take arrests. About 45 minutes after the 11 p.m. curfew, 14 additional people were arrested while a crowd numbering over 100 chanted, "Shame, shame! RPD protects the 1 percent!" and "Who do you serve? Who do you protect?" "RPD" refers to the Rochester Police Department.

The local ACLU is considering a suit challenging the constitutionality of the arrests and curfew, and plans are underway to challenge the mayor at City Council meetings.

— Lydia Bayoneta and Gene Clancy



OCCUPY N.Y.C.

WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

Union Square protest, NYC, Nov. 6.

GREECE

Crisis exposes harsh capitalist rule of Europe

By John Catalinotto

Greece, a country of 11 million people in southeastern Europe, has become the epicenter of the world capitalist economic crisis that first appeared in the U.S. with the 2008 financial near-meltdown. While the Greek workers continued their heroic resistance in the streets, imperialist leaders and bankers have made it clear that they prefer complete control of the Greek political process rather than allow even a sham democracy in Athens.

For one week, Greek political events made the front page of the corporate dailies in both the news and business sections. The imperialist banks' attempt to squeeze payments on usurious loans from the Greek workers forced a reorganization of Greek's capitalist government. By the evening of Nov. 6, the unpopular Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou had stepped down.

Papandreou's PASOK party and its rival right-wing New Democracy Party agreed to form a "grand coalition" government that would implement an austerity program on behalf of Greek, European and U.S. big capital. No new prime minister had been named. The next leader will undoubtedly receive more confidence from the imperialist bankers than from the Greek people.

Behind the crisis

The corporate media in the U.S. and Western Europe have misrepresented the Greek crisis as caused by lazy Greek workers and wild government spending on social services. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Greece's inability to pay its sovereign debt stems from the worldwide capitalist downturn that threw the Greek economy into recession. This was exacerbated by extravagant government spending on the Greek military, demanded for its role in NATO, and the failure of the major Greek businesses of shipping and banking to pay taxes.

The imperialist banks, mainly in Germany and France — but these banks also include capital from U.S. investors — were more than willing to buy Greek government bonds — as long as the interest rates were high, sometimes four times as high as on loans offered in Germany. They expected a bailout from the European Union if Greece failed to pay for these usurious loans, whose interest obligations alone were 8.9 percent of the national budget.

With the Greek economy tumbling, the banks pressured Europe's political leaders — such as Angela Merkel of Germany and Nicolas Sarkozy of France — to force the Greek government to impose austerity to squeeze the debt payments out of the Greek workers. The austerity includes laying off government workers, cutting social programs, raising property taxes and privatizing the remaining nationalized property in Greece, including historic sites like the Parthenon.

Greek youth battle police over austerity measures, October 2011.

What turns the local, Greek situation into a world crisis is that if Greece were to refuse the austerity program and stop debt payments, this could provoke a similar crisis in Italy, whose economy is seven times as large as Greece's. It could put the entire eurozone at risk of a financial crisis and a new European recession, which would reduce economic growth worldwide.

For the Greek working class, how strong the euro is as a world currency is not as important as what job they have, what they have to eat, what shelter, and what schools and hospitals are available. Prior austerity programs have already closed, in 2011, some 1,054 schools, more than 50 hospitals and dozens of university departments, while unemployment has risen rapidly to nearly 17 percent.

A new austerity program would provoke a deeper recession and increase all those numbers.

Papandreou's maneuver with the referendum

Papandreou first made an agreement on Oct. 27 with the European imperialists for a new austerity plan in return for new loans and a partial debt writedown. This unpopular move made his political future bleak.

In a maneuver aimed at saving his political career, Papandreou then declared that Greece would hold a popular referendum on the European plan. He was gambling on waging a campaign to frighten most Greeks into backing the program for fear of leaving the eurozone.

But Europe's big banks wanted no part of Papandreou's gamble. Forget democracy when it comes to big money. Like questions of war and peace, questions of financial stability are not what the imperialist ruling class — in the U.S. as well as in Western Europe — will put to a popular vote, even when they dominate the propaganda machine.

On the eve of the G-20 summit in Cannes, France, on Nov. 3-4, Sarkozy and Merkel raised a howl. Like other leaders of smaller predatory gangs, they made an offer that neither Papandreou nor PASOK's conservative rivals in New Democracy could refuse. New Democracy and PASOK had to form a joint regime to assure that Greece backs the agreement. Forget any consultation with the Greek people.

The Greek capitalist regime intends to impose the austerity plan and pass a budget in the next few months and then, with this already in place, hold new parliamentary elections in February 2012.

Greek workers still fighting

While the Greek working class has no representation in the new government, they still have the streets and the power to withhold their labor. There have been a half dozen general strikes in the last year alone, and dozens of other major mass actions as the Greek workers continue their heroic struggle against the big capitalists of Greece, Europe and world imperialism. Another one is set for Nov. 10 to continue protesting the new program.

At a rally outside Parliament on Nov. 4, Aleka Papariga, general secretary of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), said, "The KKE calls on the people to struggle for the people's ownership over the concentrated means of production in industry, for the socialization of land, of the big businesses in agriculture and the concentrated trade sector."

Papariga called for "disengagement from the EU and cancellation of the debt with people's power." (solidnet.org, Nov. 7) □

FRANCE

Thousands oppose G-20

Thousands of protesters converged on the sixth summit of the Group of Twenty (G-20) Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, which met in Cannes, France, from Nov. 3 to Nov. 4. As with previous G-20 meetings, local demonstrators were joined by others from Spain, Belgium, Britain, Japan, Mexico, France and other countries. (Prensa Latina, Nov. 4)

Along with protests concluding with a mass demonstration at Garibaldi Square in Nice, France, activists also held a People's Forum to denounce unemployment, the cutting of social services and other austerity measures being imposed by governments around the world.

— LeiLani Dowell

Protests in Haiti vs. widespread cholera, suffering

By G. Dunkel

PHOTO: HAÏTI LIBERTÉ

Banner says: 'Long live Haiti without occupation. Justice and reparations for the victims of cholera. Mobilization Collective to compensate the victims of cholera.'

Conditions in Haiti are growing ever more desperate. As misery and repression grow, so too does resistance.

Hundreds of thousands of Haitians are living under shreds of fabric that used to be tarps or tents, in the camps set up for survivors of the Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake.

More than 6,500 Haitians have died from cholera since last year. According to Dr. Renaud Piarroux, a cholera specialist at Aix-Marseilles University, 10,000 new cases are being reported each month. Around 600,000 Haitians have been sickened with the disease. A United Nations report released in October says Haiti is the country in the world most affected by cholera.

Haitians and most experts believe that Minustah, the U.N. force that began occupying Haiti seven years ago, introduced cholera into Haiti over a year ago by dumping raw sewerage into a river used by people for drinking and bathing.

Sanitation and access to clean water are essential to limit the spread of cholera.

In 652 of the camps created to shelter people displaced by the earthquake, only 7 percent had access to clean water in August, and out of 12,000 latrines needed, only 38 percent were usable. The money for cleaning and servicing these latrines ran out in August.

Only 12 percent of the camps have facilities for hand washing, compared to 20 percent in March. The National Directorate for Water and Sanitation of the Haitian government conducted this survey in August, which was reported by the U.N.'s Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs.

Half of all Haitians don't get enough to eat, and more than that live on less than $1 a day. At least eight hundred thousand people have no regular access to basic staples. Less than one-third of all Haitians have a regular job.

On Oct. 19, hundreds of protesters took to the streets in Port-au-Prince and Peite-Rivière, a small city in the Artibonite, the central part of Haiti, where cholera was introduced.

In Port-au-Prince on Oct. 19 — the one-year anniversary of the cholera outbreak — hundreds of people responded to the call of the Collective for Reparations for Cholera Victims. They took the streets in Fort-National, a working-class community in Port-au-Prince, and carried placards denouncing Minustah; the U.N.; Bill Clinton, who heads the commission controlling Haiti's finances; and the imperialist powers, like the U.S. and France, who installed Minustah.

The Artibonite has suffered a serious economic blow from cholera, because it is a rice growing area, and workers are refusing to go into the paddies because that is where they get cholera. Haitians in the diaspora have also stopped visiting because of fear of cholera, and the agricultural products of the area have lost their markets. At Hinche, another city in the Artibonite, a demonstration protesting Minustah and cholera took place Oct. 31. (Haïti-Liberté, 2 novembre, 26 octobre)

The Movement for Liberty, Equality and Fraternity for all Haitians (or Moleghaf — derived from its name in Creole) has been conducting a picket line in front of the Ministry of Social Affairs every Tuesday for a few months. They are struggling against unemployment, hunger, misery and the high cost of living.

At the picket line on Oct. 25, eight Moleghaf militants were arrested and taken to the main police station. Moleghaf called for a mobilization to free them, and when a judge held a hearing the next day, with several dozen militants marching outside, they were released immediately. Moleghaf has announced it intends to continue its protest. □

With assassination of FARC leader

The struggle continues in Colombia

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Alfonso Cano, leader of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) was killed in combat on Nov. 4 by the Colombian Army in that country's southwest region of Cauca. For several hours that day, dozens of helicopters and planes surrounded this rural area, the home of peasant families, and then they started bombing, hitting the place where the FARC leader was.

Cano's compañera, Patricia González, and another guerrilla fighter responsible for communications were also killed.

According to a video by mainstream Caracol news, the military had been tracking Cano for more than five years with U.S. assistance and had had army troops infiltrate the community and intercept phone calls of Cano's closest comrades in an effort to track him down.

TeleSUR had broad coverage of the massacre, reporting that peasants, some of whose homes were bombed, were trying to flee the bombing that continued after Cano's death.

Alfonso Cano, communist & FARC leader

Cano was leader of the FARC, having replaced FARC founder Manuel Marulanda in 2008, when this legendary guerrilla leader died of natural causes in the jungle that housed him and where he fought for most of his life. In his youth, Cano had studied anthropology and law in the National University. He was an activist with the Colombian Communist Party before he joined the FARC.

Cano was among those who founded the Patriotic Union (UP) electoral party in the 1980s when the FARC tried to engage politically in the electoral arena during a cease-fire in the guerrilla war. Though the UP had many political victories in the 1986 elections, the state and death squads assassinated more than 4,000 of its members in the following years, and the FARC resumed the guerrilla struggle.

Under Cano's leadership, the FARC reoriented their strategies to respond to the newest and vicious anti-insurgent attacks promoted by Washington's Plan Colombia. This regained them some ground during the period from 2009 to 2011 that they had lost earlier.

Many articles and reports, including a statement from the courageous Colombian former senator and peace activist, Piedad Córdoba, call Cano's killing a serious setback for the peace process in that beleaguered country. Cano's leadership helped bring about the release of numerous persons that the guerrilla army had held in the hope of winning the release of the many FARC members in Colombian and U.S. jails and an eventual peace negotiation that would end the Colombian people's suffering.

Colombian president, Juan Manuel Santos, whom the media have presented as a "gentler" figure compared with his paramilitary predecessor, Álvaro Uribe, is still part of the oligarchy and a pro-war figure. Santos was Uribe's minister of defense, and as such, he plotted the massacre in 2008 in Sucumbíos, Ecuador, that killed FARC leader Raúl Reyes, several other FARC members and four Mexican students who were visiting the encampment for a research study.

Under his ministry the "false positive" fraud was initiated. The corpses of the mostly young people the army killed were then dressed as guerrillas. The regime then claimed the military had killed "guerrillas in combat." No one has been punished for these murders.

Santos claims he is working for peace. But instead of engaging in negotiations with the insurgent forces of the FARC and the National Liberation Army (ELN), he

Alfonso Cano

states that if you "cut off the head, you kill the monster." ("acabando la cabeza, termina el monstruo") Thus he aims to end the guerrilla war by assassinating the insurgent leaders.

The FARC-EP to continue its struggle

Santos has misjudged the depth of the FARC. Several FARC leaders have been killed — Reyes, Iván Ríos, Jorge Briceño (el Mono Jojoy) — and the historic leader, Marulanda, died a natural death, yet the guerrilla struggle has continued, with other leaders assuming the direction. There is no reason to believe this time will be different.

Revolutionary belligerent forces are born from conditions of extreme inequality and injustice. They are not terrorists, isolated from the people, but are sustained by the aspirations of a people to be free and develop their own destiny. And as such, they have echo in the poorest sectors of the nation.

In an article by José Antonio Gutiérrez on Oct. 14, entitled "Santos: green light for dirty war in Colombia," the author explains that wealthy landowners have a vested interest in keeping the war against the insurgency alive. They use the paramilitaries to terrorize communities in order to tighten their hold on the land when the residents flee the paramilitaries' terror.

Gutiérrez quotes from a report of the Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris (CNAI), an NGO led by León Valencia, whom Gutiérrez says is close to Santos. Even Valencia admits that "the ones that paradoxically guarantee the property of the peasants is an illegal armed group — the FARC — and not the state." (http://anarkismo.net)

The FARC continue to recruit. They are armed. They know the jungle. If they wanted to, they could "escape" and demobilize as Santos has demanded. But they have not. In fact, their public statement after Cano's death was: "This will not be the first time that the oppressed and exploited of Colombia cry for one of their great leaders. Nor either will it be the first time that they will replace him with the anger and the absolute conviction in the victory. The peace in Colombia will not be born out of any guerrilla demobilization, but of the definitive abolition of the causes that give birth to the uprising. There is an established policy and that is the one that will be continued." (www.abpnoticias.com)

Now that the U.S. government has signed the Free Trade Agreement despite the horrendous human rights abuses in Colombia, including the killing of union leaders and social activists, the poverty and extreme inequality will only be likely to increase. Social rumblings by trade union leaders, and social, Indigenous and student activists are already making headlines with a new resurgence of activism.

The armed resistance is a reflection and is part of the whole movement that tries to form a new reality for the benefit of the Colombian masses, each with its own ways of struggle, armed and unarmed, but all towards the same goal: peace, and social and economic justice.

Compañero Alfonso Cano, ¡Presente! □

'Free ALL the Cuban Five!'

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Sehwerert, Fernando González Llort and Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez.

By Cheryl LaBash
New York

On Nov. 5, the auditorium at the Service Employees union Local 1199 building in New York filled with the call to free the Cuban Five at a public event corresponding with a meeting of the National Network on Cuba. The purpose of the meeting and the spirit of those participating were expressed in a message read by Nancy Cabrera from Casa de las Américas written by Ramón Labañino on behalf of the Cuban Five — Labañino, Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero, René González — especially for this gathering.

A great but incomplete joy was felt when seeing recently released brother René González in the arms of his daughters, and hearing his words to the Cuban people while still being forced to remain in the U.S. against his will and reason.

"We are not naïve. These more than 13 years of legal struggle have shown time and again that this process is absolutely political and that the decisions handed down come and are dealt from higher levels. Because of all this, the fact that we are gathered here today in this space is so important for all of us. It is time to mobilize ourselves to the maximum, to demonstrate, to protest, to write, to make calls, to publish and in this way to make the truth that we defend count, so that truth and real justice is served.

"In the same way that today in so many parts of the world the 'indignados' are mobilized against all the outrages and exploitation, so should we. And we know that in this solidarity we can uphold freedom. We are optimistic because we are confident in the eternal power of our people and the beautiful truth that we defend. We are sure that one day soon we will all be united, defending other just causes, and demanding freedom for other sisters and brothers that are in similar circumstances."

The statement addressed the extraordinary punishment for Gerardo Hernández, who is suffering two life sentences and the denial of any visitation from his spouse, Adriana Pérez; the current habeas corpus appeals in process; and the extreme measures and expense by the U.S. government to oppress and deport immigrant workers, tearing their families apart.

Speakers included Esperanza Luzbert from the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP); the Rev. Luis Barrios, newly appointed co-executive director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization/Pastors for Peace; Thenjiwe McHarris, Amnesty International northeast field organizer; attorney Michael Tarif Warren, who introduced Miami attorney Richard Klugh, an original and appellate member of the Cuban Five legal defense team; Gloria LaRiva, National Committee to Free the Cuban Five; and Alicia Jrapko, International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five. □

NEW YORK MEETING

WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

Speakers demand freedom for the Five, Nov. 5.

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WORKERS WORLD editorial

Super cutbacks loom

A secret Star Chamber is meeting right now in Washington, D.C. Like those of Medieval English monarchies, this assembly flouts its abuse of power. Its sessions are held behind closed doors, far from members of the public whose fate they are deciding.

The 12 Republicans and Democrats on the congressional super committee (formerly the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction) are surreptitiously making monumental budgetary decisions. The standard of living and quality of life for tens of millions of people in this country is in jeopardy.

Yet, it's Wall Street's dream. This body is doing what the capitalist class has wanted to do for decades: Undo the social insurance and health care plans that the working class fought for and won — and paid for.

Its mission is to come up with a 10-year "deficit reduction" plan to cut $1.2 trillion from the federal budget. Congress would have to OK it and then it would go to President Barack Obama to sign. Republicans have proposed $2.2 trillion in cutbacks, with most coming from social programs. They vehemently oppose any new taxes for the superrich.

However, the Democrats have put forth a $3.2 trillion plan that goes even further than the super committee's mandate and is to the right of many bipartisan plans. It includes some tax increases for the wealthy, but — and it's a big but — their plan also proposes massive cutbacks, including a $475 billion reduction for Medicare and Medicaid.

The committee has until so-called Thanksgiving eve to arrive at a severe austerity plan, as required by the Budget Control Act. If it doesn't, an automatic trigger will cut $1.2 trillion "across the board," hammering essential social insurance and government programs. Although it mandates "equal cuts" to the military budget, the Pentagon will never go without war funding.

Either way, the masses of people are being squeezed between a proverbial rock and a hard place.

The National Organization for Women's Action Alert calls for mass pressure on Congress to oppose "Politicians' raid [of] critically important programs that benefit millions in order to pay for ... wars, Wall Street greed and politicians' failure to require millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share in federal taxes."

NOW condemned committee Republicans who all voted for "the notorious Ryan budget, which would have decimated Medicare and Medicaid and threatened the integrity of Social Security, while ... enhancing tax breaks for big corporations and millionaires."

"But," NOW says, "it's beyond distressing to see some Democrats ... embracing plans that would cause great hardship on retirees — mainly women, particularly women of color, as well as people with severe disabilities and our oldest seniors. The Democrats' proposal would change the cost-of-living allowance so that monthly benefits are dramatically reduced, further impoverishing the millions of seniors [and disabled people] who depend exclusively on their Social Security check."

NOW chastised Democrats for not having a strong revenue-generating plan: "Their proposed ratio of spending cuts to revenue increases is ... miserable ... the most anemic of all deficit reduction plans."

National polls show that the majority of people oppose cutting Social Security or health care programs, raising eligibility ages or putting more medical costs on their backs.

There are ways to solve the "deficit crisis" without further harm to working-class and poor communities. A "People's Super Committee" could propose: First, terminate the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest 5 percent. This would raise $2 trillion over 10 years. Second, end U.S. wars abroad: Interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan have cost more than $1.3 trillion. Third, stop bank bailouts: Trillions of dollars have been handed over in recent years.

What can be done? Workers World congratulates anti-war activists who disrupted a super committee session, and we cheer on the "Occupy Wall Street" movement that is challenging capitalist greed. WW supports wholeheartedly the call for an Occupy for Jobs Movement mandated at the Nov. 5 People's Assembly at Hostos Community College in Bronx, N.Y. (See page 5.)

The only way to set back this criminal, pro-corporate onslaught on the multinational working class is to continue and increase mass pressure and protests. All the social programs now under attack were won through struggle and belong to the people. □

Students walk out against Zionism

PHOTO: NOUR ABED

Supporters of Palestine organized a successful protest and demonstration against an Israeli Defense Force spokesperson, who spoke at a Zionist forum at the Wayne State University campus in Detroit on Nov. 1. With only 15 hours notice, Arab-American youth issued a call to pack the forum. More than 120 people responded, wearing red duct tape over their mouths and holding signs opposing Zionism. In unison, the supporters of Palestine walked out of the auditorium, leaving behind 20 or so people in the audience. The youth regrouped outside and held a militant demonstration denouncing the Israeli settler state.

— Mike Shane

PALESTINE

U.S., Israel attack humanitarian aid

By Gene Clancy

On Nov. 4, the Israeli Defense Forces forcibly boarded a Canadian vessel and an Irish boat which were carrying humanitarian supplies to desperate Palestinians who are suffering from an illegal Israeli blockade.

Although no resistance was offered, the IDF, nevertheless, sent activists on board the vessels to a prison in Israel to await deportation.

The activists on the Canadian ship, the Tahrir, posted signs on the vessel written in red ink in English and Hebrew reading "Gaza Blockade Is Illegal" and "Attacking an Unarmed Ship Is Piracy," a photo posted on the group's Twitter feed shows. (Bloomberg Business Week, Nov. 4)

The boats were carrying about $30,000 worth of medicines and letters from school children.

Speaking after prayers at a Gaza City mosque, Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas prime minister, addressed the passengers aboard the boats, saying, "Your message has been delivered whether you make it or not." (ABC News, Nov. 4)

"The siege is unjust and must end," Haniyeh said.

The day before the seizure, the Obama administration warned U.S. citizens on the boats that they may face legal action for violating Israeli and U.S. law.

State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said the U.S. was renewing its warning to Americans "not to involve themselves in this activity." (Reuters, Nov. 5)

Israeli aggression against the Palestinians and their supporters was not limited to their attack on the flotilla. On Nov. 3, Israeli soldiers entered Palestinian farmland inside northern Gaza. When the Palestinians defended their land, the Israelis called in an air strike which killed two young men. The latest killings followed the killing of 10 civilians by IDF air strikes just the week before.

Holding poor people hostage

Military attacks on Palestinians and their supporters are apparently not enough for the Israelis and their imperialist supporters. Enraged because UNESCO, a United Nations agency, had accepted Palestine as a full member of the organization, the U.S. abruptly cut off its share of funding, over $60 million, threatening the ability of this entirely peaceful agency to carry out its mission. Israel Radio reported that Israel too would default on its annual contribution to UNESCO. All members of the U.N. are required to contribute to the UNESCO fund according to a sliding scale.

UNESCO's stated aim is "to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information" ("Introducing Unesco," Unesco.org)

The U.S. action showed its willingness to strike at poor people throughout the world to support its Zionist ally.

For their part, the Israelis quickly moved from piracy on the high seas to outright theft. On Nov. 1, Israel announced that it would punitively suspend the monthly transfer of roughly $100 million in customs, border and some income taxes that it collects on behalf of the Palestinians and relays to their government in the West Bank.

This is income that the Palestinian Authority depends on to administer basic infrastructure and social services. The cutoff comes just days before a Muslim holiday.

The Israelis also announced that they were speeding up their illegal settlements on the West Bank as a reprisal against the UNESCO decision.

Preparing for war in the Middle East

U.S. and Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people must be viewed within the context of the U.S. and its allies' war strategy against Iran.

According to the Daily Mail in Britain, "Barack Obama and [British Prime Minster] David Cameron are preparing for war because of fears "that Iran now has enough enriched uranium for four nuclear weapons," (Nov. 2)

Another British newspaper, The Guardian, reports that British military officials believe the U.S. may decide to step up plans for targeted missile attacks against some key Iranian facilities, and the officials "say that if Washington presses ahead it will seek, and receive, U.K. military help for any mission." (Nov. 2)

A "preemptive" strike against Iran was also discussed at an Israeli cabinet meeting. (AP, Nov. 1)

Iran has been a steadfast supporter of the Palestinian struggle, and Israel has identified Iran as its main enemy in the world. The U.S. has its eyes on Iran's large oil deposits, strategic location, and most of all, its pursuit of an anti-imperialist foreign policy.

Iran has repeatedly stated that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes. The state of Israel has hundreds and the U.S. tens of thousands of nuclear weapons.

The U.S.-Israeli buildup for a wider war in the Middle East must be resisted by peace loving people everywhere. □

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As imperialism expands in Africa

Libyan forces regroup to resist puppet regime

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

As the U.S.-NATO war against Libya enters another phase, the neocolonial designs on the state with the largest oil reserves in Africa become more and more obvious. Executive decrees enacted by the imperialist-installed National Transitional Council are attempting to reverse the gains made since the beginning of the Al-Fateh Revolution of Sept. 1, 1969.

The announcement that the country will be governed by Islamic law must be examined in relationship to the actual policies of the NTC regime.

The social gains of the Al-Fateh Revolution under Moammar Gadhafi guaranteed free education, health care, housing, pensions and civil rights of the Indigenous people and women. These benefits will be targeted under the existing system. Objectively, the status of women is threatened with the repeal of the marriage act instituted under the Jamahiriya (Gadhafi's name for the state translated as "state of the masses") republic, which accorded women the right to divorce and inherit property.

Widespread retribution is being carried out by the NTC forces against loyalists of the former government.

Nonetheless, these changes being imposed on the Libyan people are being met with growing objections and resistance. This defiance is being revealed through graffiti painted on walls that sharply criticize and condemn the puppet government and call for its removal.

An effort is underway to formally organize opposition to the neocolonial plans for Libya. It is largely based in the southwest of the country. In the region known as the Sahel, former officials, operatives and supporters of the Gadhafi government are meeting on a daily basis to chart the next phase of the struggle to reclaim their nation.

Calling itself the Libyan Liberation Front, the organization plans to activate existing popular committees established during the rule of Gadhafi to initiate a campaign to render the NTC regime ungovernable. The country is awash with sophisticated light arms, mortars and short-range missiles as a result of the wide distribution of these weapons by the Jamahiriya government in the aftermath of the U.S.-NATO onslaught on this North African state.

Also the LLF is examining ways of intervening in the supposed national elections that the NTC announced recently in Tripoli. These elections are slated to be held by mid-2012, and LLF forces are planning to field candidates — if they are not banned by the pro-Western regime.

Prospects for a national resistance movement in Libya

Despite the disaffection of certain sectors of the Libyan population from the Gadhafi government, demonstrations in support of the Jamahiriya attracted hundreds of thousands of people prior to the fall of Tripoli in late August.

With the destruction of the national infrastructure, along with the theft of the state treasury and foreign assets of Libya, anger and discontent are spreading rapidly. These factors will breed resistance to the current political situation and spark acts of rebellion that the NTC will face.

In addition, NTC forces are heavily armed by the U.S. and NATO and remain largely an undisciplined network of autonomous units. Deep divisions within rebel ranks have resulted in shootouts among various factions. The apparent political leadership of the NTC has been unable to rein in the armed militias, which have refused to unite into a single military structure controlled by the officials.

Meanwhile, reports indicate that neighboring Niger is serving as a rear base for the LLF as they organize for future actions. According to one member of the resistance movement, "More than 800 organizers have arrived from Libya just to Niger and more are coming every day." (Franklin Lamb, counterpunch.org, Nov. 4-6)

This loyalist fighter is quoted as saying, "It is not like your Western media presents the situation, of desperate Gadhafi loyalists frantically handing out bundles of cash and gold bars to buy their safety from the NATO death squads now swarming around the northern areas of our motherland. Our brothers have controlled the borderless routes in this region for thousands of years and they know how not to be detected even by NATO satellites and drones."

The LLF is reported to be working initially toward building a "people's struggle employing the Maoist tactic of 1,000 cuts against the current group claiming to represent Libya." Resistance movement organizers have access to satellite phones, laptops and other equipment that will be utilized to gather information and dispatch fighters throughout the country.

The LLF has already claimed responsibility for two major operations inside the country. The bombing of a fuel storage facility in Sirte, which was reported in the Nov. 10 issue of Workers World, resulted in the reported deaths of more than 100 NTC rebels. Also the LLF says that it carried out the assassination of NTC official, Amin al-Manfur al-Manfa, who had previously worked for Gadhafi but switched sides after the Feb. 17 rebellion began in Benghazi. (adnkronos.com, Nov. 4)

An LLF spokesperson was quoted as saying that the movement is launching a campaign of assassination targeting the 500 top officials and operatives of the NTC regime. The resistance movement stresses, "We are ready to initiate a campaign to eliminate all the leaders of the National Transitional Council, killing them one by one. This is only the first list that we intend to draw up. There are names of all the traitors that deserve the death penalty." (feb17.info, Nov. 4)

At the same time LLF officials have denied reports that the son and heir-apparent of Moammar Gadhafi, Seif al-Islam, is seeking to turn himself in to the International Criminal Court to stand trial for alleged war crimes. Statements made by Seif al-Islam over the last several weeks have reaffirmed his commitment to resistance against the neocolonial regime now claiming to be the legitimate authorities in Libya.

The ICC issued arrest warrants against Moammar Gadhafi, Seif al-Islam and other officials during the imperialist bombing campaign earlier this year. This body, located in the Netherlands, serves as a tool of Western foreign policy in efforts aimed at regime change in various African states.

The ICC is notorious for its attempts to prosecute African leaders. It has not targeted any official from the imperialist states and their allies who have committed horrendous war crimes over the last two decades. Although the ICC made statements indicating that it would investigate crimes committed by the NATO-led NTC forces, no indictments have been issued against the rebels, let alone their supporters within the ruling classes based in Western Europe and North America.

Anti-imperialist solidarity with Africa, including Libya

The U.S.-NATO war in Libya, the installation of a puppet regime, and the large-scale theft of the treasury and national resources of the country portend much for the rest of the African continent. Africa's strategic role of supplying oil and minerals to the world capitalist system is necessitating the expansion of militarism on the continent.

Developments in Libya cannot be viewed separately from the enhancement of the role of the U.S. Africa Command in various countries. In Central and East Africa, the Pentagon has dispatched at least 100 advisers and Special Forces commandos to four separate independent states.

In Somalia, hundreds are being killed every week by CIA-Pentagon predator drones in a military campaign to liquidate the Al-Shabaab Islamic resistance movement, which controls large sections in the center and south of this Horn of Africa nation. The U.S.-backed regime in Kenya has launched a full-scale invasion of southern Somalia, supported by Washington and Paris.

Kenyan military forces lost 15 soldiers on Nov. 6 when their battalion was ambushed by Al-Shabaab fighters in the southern town of Tabata. Kenyan air force planes have dropped bombs in southern Somalia, and the French navy has also shelled areas thought to be occupied by Al-Shabaab supporters.

These attacks on the sovereignty and independence of Africa will continue. African peoples will inevitably organize politically and militarily to meet this renewed challenge on the part of imperialism to solidify its neocolonial control of the continent.

The pro-Western regimes in Africa are economically and socially fragile and are therefore subject to pressures exerted by the U.S. and other imperialist states. The anti-war movement inside North America and Europe must categorically oppose this new wave of military interventions in Africa.

These struggles in Africa against imperialist militarism are closely connected with the worsening economic crisis inside the capitalist states. Resources that should be utilized for the creation of jobs, adequate housing, universal health care and quality education in the Western countries are being squandered in repeated failed attempts to dominate Africa, Central and South Asia, the Middle East and Latin America.

Consequently, progressive forces in the Western countries must demonstrate their maximum solidarity with the African peoples in their fight against military intervention and exploitation by the imperialist states. This international unity of purpose and action can ensure the necessary advancement needed during this period to further the liberation of humanity throughout the world. □

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Global Day of Action against Wall Street greed, New York, Oct. 15.

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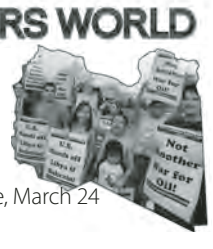

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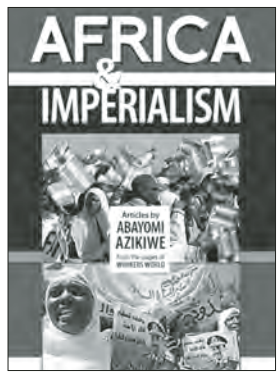

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Gira de niños/as cubanos/as y votación de la ONU

Demandan fin al bloqueo de Cuba

Por Cheryl LaBash

La Compañía de Teatro Infantil de Cuba, La Colmenita, concluyó su gira por los Estados Unidos el 29 de octubre en la ciudad de San Francisco. La visita de esta entrañable embajadora del Fondo Infantil de la ONU coincidió con dos eventos importantes para Cuba: el trigésimo quinto aniversario del bombardeo del avión de la aerolínea Cubana en Barbados y la vigésima votación anual de la ONU condenando el bloqueo estadounidense de Cuba.

La obra más reciente de la Colmenita, "Abracadabra", representa la búsqueda por la escuela infantil, de "la esencia de las cosas", dirigida por una nueva profesora joven. Los/as niños/as a su vez guían a la audiencia para que vea el encarcelamiento por parte de los EEUU de los cinco cubanos desde la perspectiva del pueblo cubano, para quien los cinco son héroes que trataban de proteger su patria socialista de los ataques terroristas.

Casi todo el mundo en Cuba ha sido tocado personalmente por la campaña de terror que con impunidad por más de 50 años ha sido librada contra ellos desde territorio de Estados Unidos. La explosión del Vuelo 455 de Cubana de Aviación mató a 73 personas, entre ellas al padre de Carlos Alberto Cremata, el fundador y director de La Colmenita, que a la sazón tenía 41 años.

Luis Posada Carriles, uno de los arquitectos de ese terror, sigue vivo y anda libre en Miami a pesar de un pedido de extradición por la República Bolivariana de Venezuela y un tratado internacional que obliga a que esos autores sean extraditados o juzgados en su país de residencia.

El 24 de octubre, La Colmenita trajo canciones, música y la verdadera historia de los cinco cubanos, leída por el destacado actor y activista Danny Glover ante las Naciones Unidas. Las lágrimas, la alegría y el baile despertados por estos/as irresistibles jóvenes intérpretes inspiraron a la audiencia de la ONU como lo hicieron en cada lugar que visitaron, deleitando a personas de todas las edades con su amor y calidez sin reparo.

Al día siguiente, por vigésima vez consecutiva, la Asamblea General de la ONU votó abrumadoramente, con la aprobación de 186 países, por la "necesidad de poner fin al bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero impuesto por los Estados Unidos de América contra Cuba". Como en la votación del año pasado, sólo EEUU e Israel votaron a favor de continuar el bloqueo de Cuba. Micronesia, las Islas Marshall y Palau se abstuvieron.

Aunque los actos paramilitares de agresión contra Cuba se destacan por su violencia manifiesta y erróneamente podrían atribuirse a actos desesperados por un pequeño número de fanáticos cubanos exiliados en Florida, el bloqueo unilateral económico por EEUU significa un acto de guerra. Revela que el objetivo general del gobierno de Estados Unidos es destruir la revolución socialista independiente de Cuba.

En su declaración antes de la votación, el ministro cubano de relaciones exteriores, Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla informó que el bloqueo ha costado al pueblo cubano 975 mil millones de dólares. Recordando la Convención de 1948 sobre Genocidio, él se refirió al memorando del gobierno estadounidense del 6 de abril de 1960 que declaraba que los objetivos del bloqueo eran "causar ... desencanto y desafección basado en la insatisfacción económica y las dificultades ... debilitar la vida económica de Cuba... negar dinero y suministros a Cuba, para disminuir los salarios reales, provocar hambre, desesperación y el derrocamiento del Gobierno".

Él continuó diciendo: "Estados Unidos nunca ha ocultado el hecho de que el objetivo que persigue es derrocar al gobierno revolucionario y destruir el orden constitucional que el pueblo soberano cubano defiende. Eso es lo que el ex presidente George Bush llamó "un cambio de régimen", que actualmente ha adquirido nuevas dimensiones".

El total de votos de las Naciones Unidas en 2010 fue de 187, uno más que la votación del 25 de octubre de este año. Libia estaba ausente, después de haber sufrido un bombardeo masivo y la destrucción de su gobierno independiente por la agresión imperialista de los EEUU/OTAN. □

Wall Street y la campaña anti-inmigrante

Por Teresa Gutierrez

El 18 de octubre la administración Obama anunció que había deportado a casi 400.000 inmigrantes indocumentados/as durante el año fiscal 2011. "En total, esta administración ha deportado casi 1,2 millones de personas, dejando una estela de devastación en las comunidades latinas a través de la nación", dijo la Unión Americana de Libertades Civiles en un comunicado de prensa.

La comunidad latina tiene el mayor grupo de inmigrantes en Estados Unidos, pero personas procedentes de Asia, África, el Cercano Oriente y el Caribe también han sido víctimas de la campaña antiinmigrante que arrasa el país. Las deportaciones masivas y la detención sin precedente de trabajadores/as equivalen a un tsunami de injusticia.

Es un ataque no sólo contra los/as trabajadores/as inmigrantes sino realmente contra toda la clase trabajadora. Su objetivo no es sólo para aterrorizar a uno de los sectores más explotados de la clase trabajadora, sino también para sembrar división en un momento cuando la solidaridad y la unidad entre la clase obrera es tan decisiva.

No debemos equivocarnos, la deportación y la detención de los/as trabajadores/as es un gran negocio. Es enormemente rentable para la clase capitalista. Es por esto que la inmigración y la defensa de los/as trabajadores/as inmigrantes tiene mucho que ver con el movimiento de Ocupar Wall Street.

Recientes artículos en la prensa progresista y la producción de un documental de PBS, "Perdido en detención" revelan la profundidad de la injusticia. Algunos de los datos demuestran la nefasta alianza entre las parasíticas empresas y los políticos de Washington que voluntariamente aceptan órdenes de los altos ejecutivos empresariales.

En un artículo escrito para el Programa de las Américas, Peter Cervantes-Gautschi muestra que las dos empresas más grandes que construyen y operan las cárceles en los EEUU están muy implicadas en las legislaciones antiinmigrante desde Georgia hasta Arizona. (cipamericas.org) Esto no sorprende cuando el cabildeo empresarial en Washington — que implica cantidades obscenas de dinero — es una de las razones de por qué hay tanta rabia contra Wall Street.

Las dos empresas que Cervantes-Gautschi señala son la Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) y el grupo GEO. Estas dos empresas ya se han ganado la ira de grupos progresistas. Los/as activistas pro derechos de prisioneros/as y las familias de los/as encarcelados/as durante años han denunciado la CCA por sus abusos y por obtener ganancias del injusto encarcelamiento de tantos/as en este país.

Según el Centro Pew, una de cada 99 personas en EEUU está encarcelada. Debido al racismo generalizado e institucionalizado, la tasa es criminalmente más alta para la gente negra y latina. Estados Unidos tiene la tasa de encarcelación más alta del mundo, por lo que el desenfrenado esfuerzo por encarcelar a los/as inmigrantes no es ninguna sorpresa.

El Grupo GEO es una corporación mundial basada en la Florida. Es malsanamente famosa por haber conseguido el contrato en 2003 para administrar el Campamento de Detención de la Bahía de Guantánamo en tierra ocupada de Cuba socialista. Este centro de detención ha sido el objetivo de gente progresista por su uso por el gobierno estadounidense para detener ilegal e injustamente a musulmanes, especialmente bajo el pretexto de "luchar contra el terrorismo".

Según Cervantes-Gautschi, el GEO y la CCA solamente en un año, gastaron un total de $6 millones para cabildear al Congreso. Señala que mientras los/as trabajadores/as se manifestaban en cifras récord en 2006, el escenario estaba siendo arreglado para un cambio radical en la política de inmigración hacia una de aplicar duramente la ley.

Cervantes-Gautschi señala que los "asesores de Wall Street recomendaron públicamente que compraran acciones en compañías privadas de prisiones como las CCA y GEO" y que por cada dólar gastado en cabildear al gobierno, el GEO recibió ingresos de $662 en contratos, para un total de $996,7 millones". La CCA recibió un total de $330,4 millones.

El documental de la PBS "Perdido en detención", describe cómo desde 2008 ha habido "niveles históricos" de detenciones y deportaciones, un hecho que para siempre marcará a la administración Obama.

El documental muestra cómo después de que un/a trabajador/a es capturado/a — en una redada semejante a las de la Gestapo o en una detención aterrorizante por la policía — y antes de que él o ella sea deportado/a, es encarcelado/a en lo que realmente es un almacén de seres humanos, en centros de detención donde las corporaciones son las dueñas y administradoras.

El encarcelamiento de la mano de obra migratoria representa el sistema de encarcelación de más rápido crecimiento en este país. Ya hay más de 250 centros de detención de inmigrantes en los Estados Unidos. Son lugares repugnantes, exactamente como las prisiones que encarcelan mayormente a afroamericanos/as y latinos/as. Generalmente son construidas en lugares remotos, lejos del lugar de residencia de los familiares de los/as detenidos/as por lo cual es difícil la visita de sus seres queridos.

Durante la detención, los/as trabajadores/as indocumentados/as pueden ser víctimas de golpizas, muerte o violación. El documental señala que muchos/as no tienen acceso a representación legal. Muchos/as ruegan que les deporten solamente para salir de esos terribles lugares.

Las detenciones y deportaciones masivas que afectan a millones de trabajadores/as y sus familias muestran que la lucha por los derechos de inmigrantes se conectará inevitablemente de una forma masiva e integral con el movimiento de Ocupar Wall Street. Esos sectores se unirán con su justa rabia contra la clase rica dominante que nos explota a todos/as. La semilla de esa unidad ya ha sido sembrada. □

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